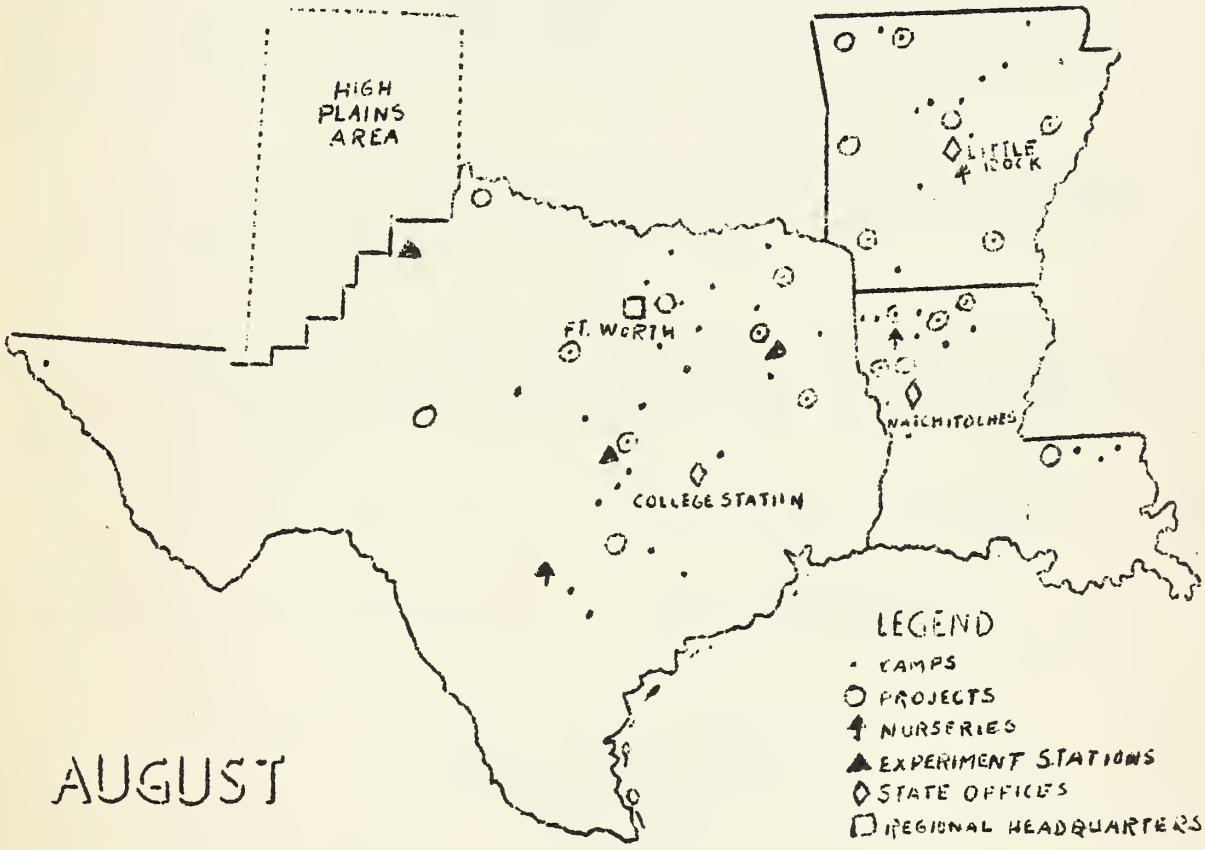
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

NEWS



AUGUST

REGION 4

COMPRISING STATES OF LOUISIANA, ARKANSAS AND TEXAS EXCEPT HIGH PLAINS AREA

FIELD DAYS ARE WORTH WHILE

I am a hillside farmer in Webster Parish. For the past three years I have read in the local paper about the activities of the Soil Conservation Service Project located at Minden. My knowledge concerning this work was general.

On July 7, I attended the Soil Conservation Service Field Day, and had the privilege of going over the area and actually seeing the work accomplished by this project.

The Technician-in-charge of our group explained why and how each piece of work was done. We saw hills with slopes over eight per cent retired from cultivation and planted to black locust or pine trees. We saw new terraces covered with strip crops of peas and sorghum. We saw terrace ends and outlet channels being controlled with bermuda sod. We saw new and old pastures with contour ridges. We saw forest stand improvement. The technician told us that we had seen every phase of the conservation program.

The men in our truck asked question after question why the different things were done and the cost of doing it. To my surprise I found that an average farmer can carry out this same program on his own farm at a reasonable cost.

I would like to state that I was very impressed with the entire program. The technician explained that land utilization was the basis of this program, putting each plot of ground to that which it is best suited. I was also impressed with the practical methods in which this work was carried on.

In another year I hope to make my farm as good as Clyde Fulbright's.

-- La-1 Project,
(By A Webster Parish Farmer) Minden, Louisiana.

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PREPARE FOR EARLY FALL

TERRACING

Several farmers have already made plans to clear their fields of crops early, so that terracing can be started earlier this fall.

Fields that may be cleared of their crops easiest are those which are solid in peas, or soybeans. These fields can be terraced as soon as the crops are cut for hay. Corn fields may be terraced immediately if the cooperator will cut and shock the corn which is in the terrace lines. This may be more practical on the fields which will produce a very low yield.

It may be possible later for some cooperators to pick all of the cotton on one field so that it can be terraced earlier than would be otherwise possible.

The Farmerville SCS project and camps especially urge any cooperators to bring it to the attention of the personnel that they will have a field which can be terraced early because of some of the provisions mentioned above.

-- La-5, Project,
Farmerville, La.

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SUMMER TERRACING

Due to the cooperation of several farmers in this area, the Soil Conservation Service terracing equipment is operating through the summer. These cooperators have permitted the Soil Conservation Service to mark the terrace lines, and either planted this space in oats, or just left the strip idle.

The outlet channels for these terraces were constructed during the winter and sodded this spring. A very nice growth of sod is now established. Sodding channels before the field is terraced gives the grass time to start growing and makes it more effective in controlling erosion.

The practice of leaving out terrace locations for summer construction enables the farmer to get his terraces earlier and helps the Soil Conservation Service complete its program.

-- La-2, Project,
Mansfield, La.

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SOIL CONSERVATION EDUCATION IN CAMPS GETS RESULTS

(Editors Note: Much has been said about the spreading of Soil Conservation practices by the CCC enrollees. This letter received from an enrollee proves that these camp boys are absorbing a great many soil conserving ideas which will be put into effect when they return to the farm.)

Mt. Hermon, Louisiana
July 31, 1937

Dear Sir:

It was in 1914 that the section of east Texas land I am about to discuss was cleared for cultivation, and at that time it would make over a bale of cotton to an acre without fertilizer. Year after year past, and in

1922 a gully began to form right through the center of this farm, water from two farms of higher elevation emptying onto it in a concentrated form. In 1928 this gully was so large that three men could walk up the center, abreast, without any trouble. In 1932, after terraces were made draining away from it, the gully began filling in with coarse white sand and in 1936 upon checking it I found that it was half full. Back in 1928 there was a rich flat close to the farmstead and in 1936 upon going back to this section I found that it had been filled in with sand from the hills on each side and at present is not worth cultivating.

It was in 1929 that the people of that community decided that they needed something done if they were going to make a living farming, so with what information was available, and using farm levels they ran lines for terraces but put their lines a little too far from each other and gave them too much fall. When they reached a distance of 100 feet from the edge of the field, they turned the terrace right down the hill. While at this farm sometime back I had an opportunity to watch these terraces work and I must say that instead of letting the water off the land easy it turned it off like pouring water out of a bucket. On the upper terraces, the longer ones, the drop was a little steeper than the others, and the last thirty or forty feet of the water channel is nothing but a gully about 18 inches deep. This gully empties into a parish road beside the fence (this road had to be moved last year because of erosion caused by water emptying into it).

I can truly say that I see ways and means to do better farming and I am going to put them into practice as soon as I go back home.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) Marvin E. Linder

Enrollee Clerk,
La. SCS Camp #18

-- La-3, Project,
Clinton, La.

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FIFTEEN YEARS HENCE

Mr. Sam J. Raines, one of our cooperators, states:

"If you leave here for ten or fifteen years and then come back to Monticello, you will find as big a change in farming practices and the conditions of soil as can possibly be imagined."

-- Ark-4, Project,
Monticello, Arkansas.

IS YOUR PASTURE OVERGRAZED?

Observation of pastures in many areas indicates considerable overgrazing as well as a further need for clipping weeds.

Pastures may be divided into three general classes: good pastures, medium pastures, and poor pastures. Good pastures will support one cow to the acre; on medium pastures two to three acres to a cow will be required; while one cow will require three to five acres in poor pasture. Since many pastures are located on eroded lands with little top soil left, we may conclude that in average upland pastures in the project area three acres will be required by one cow. It is easy therefore to overgraze where any considerable amount of stock is present.

In order to practice good pasture management the farmer should determine what class his pasture falls in. After this the adjustment of livestock to fit the pasture acreage can be made.

A further desirable practice is to have cross fences in pastures so as to permit rotation grazing.

-- Ark-2, Project,
Forrest City, Arkansas.

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PRUNE BLACK LOCUST TREES

During the past two years 792,000 Black Locusts have been planted by the Crowley Ridge Project. In most cases the growth and survival have been excellent in spite of the fact that they have been placed on the poorest sites on the farms.

Black Locusts, due to their habit of growth, usually have two or more leaders or predominating branches on each stalk. If one of these leaders is considerably stronger and larger than the others it will gradually become dominant and produce the post. However, if two or more leaders are equal, two posts will be produced but it will take much longer and the quality of the posts will be lowered. This condition may be remedied by picking the stem desired and then clipping about ten or twelve inches off the tip of the remaining leaders. This is necessary, however, only when the leaders are of equal size and vigor.

-- Ark-2, Project,
Forrest City, Arkansas.

TIME TO START PLANNING FOR WINTER COVER CROPS

By

B. H. Hendrickson,
Former Supt. Tyler Experiment
Station

The possibilities of doing more "winter farming" in this region have apparently been overlooked by farmers. In this latitude, to the west, the growing of winter small grain is well established, to the east, in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia, etc., the periodic use of winter legumes is becoming an accepted practice.

Summer legumes, either disced down, plowed under, or with residue let stand, tend to form soluble nitrates shortly after decay sets in. Nitrogen, gained in part from the air during their growth, tends to be leached out of the soil during wet winter periods, unless winter crops follow which are capable of making growth during cool weather. Hence, for example, plant oats or vetch following cowpeas. The oats conserve and protect, but generate no nitrogen in the soil.

Heavy and timely production of leguminous green manure has been obtained at the Tyler Station, and many other southern and southeastern experiment stations, with vetches, Austrian winter peas, and like crops. At the Tyler Station, it has been estimated that phosphate plus vetch seed, inoculation and planting, cost $1.00 more per acre than the recommended most profitable spring fertilization for cotton (400# 4-8-4). The prospects of sufficiently increased yields of following crops to pay for the difference the first year are good; the hold-over effects for two or three years promise to be clear gain. Other general beneficial effects follow this practice. The soil becomes more open and absorptive; produces better stands and there is less crusting; it is productive of all common crops. Leguminous green manuring "tones up" the soil, tends to make it like "new land" again.

One of the outstanding opportunities of the Soil Conservation Service is believed to be the introduction and culture of winter legumes on the better land, in sections where reasonable success seems assured.

ADVANTAGES OF WINTER COVER CROPS

1. Provide necessary protection during winter rainy season.
2. Prevent leaching.
3. Add organic matter, thereby increasing water holding capacity of the soils.
4. Improve the physical condition of the soil.
   a. Easier to work. b. Warms up quicker.
5. Provide grazing during winter months.
6. Reduce soil blowing.

— Ark-6, Project,
Waldron, Arkansas.

TRADES ALFALFA FOR BERMUDA GRASS

Substituting in the old Bible quotation, "an eye for an eye", Mr. E. C. Rider, a cooperator with the Charlotte Soil Conservation Camp, has traded four tons of alfalfa hay for two acres of Bermuda grass sod. This four tons of hay is about the equivalent of the winter forage value of the two acres of Bermuda grass.

Mr. Rider owns a farm three miles North of the camp on Cura creek on which a large acreage is being retired from cultivation to pasture. Bermuda grass is scarce in that neighborhood and Mr. Rider was particularly anxious to develop his pastures so he promoted this deal with a neighbor who used this small plot of grass to winter two or three head of mules.

-- Ark-1, Project,
Conway, Arkansas.

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A TIP ON COOPERATOR RESPONSIBILITY IN USING GOVERNMENT MACHINERY

Machinery such as fresnos, mowers, and terracers, which is lent to Soil Conservation Service cooperators should be used as soon as possible after it gets on the farm so that it may be available for other cooperators to use.

There has been considerable demand for mowers in the last several months, but some cooperators have had to wait some time because someone else had the mower standing idle. These mowers should be used and made available for the next cooperator.

Cooperators are responsible for the machinery while it is on their place. Machinery should be kept greased and oiled and protected from possible damage. Cooperators are responsible for breakage other than natural wear of the machinery. So, when you have government machinery, take care of it and use it, so that it will be available for the next cooperator.

-- Tex-6, Project,
San Angelo, Texas.

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COOPERATORS FIND VISITS TO OTHER PROJECTS PROFITABLE

On July 27, 30 of the cooperators with the Soil Conservation Service went to Mansfield, Louisiana, to inspect the project there. This tour was made in personal cars. The association is to be congratulated for the sponsorship of this tour. Let us hope that more tours of this kind will be possible.

-- Tex-7, Project,
Nacogdoches, Texas.

BEGIN NOW FOR WINTER PASTURES

Satisfactory winter growth in permanent pastures depends largely upon the efforts that are made during August, September and October. Bur clover, black medic, rescue grass and Italian rye grass should be planted in the early fall. If these seeds are to be planted on land that is being retired from cultivation to pasture, the field should be given a thorough cultivation early in order to secure a firm seed bed. Frequent harrowings will conserve the moisture and help to control weeds. Land that has been summer fallowed in this manner may be seeded by means of a grain drill that can be closed sufficiently, or by sowing broadcast by hand or with seeder and covering with a section harrow or similar drag. Mixing the seed with barnyard manure and distributing with a manure spreader or scattering from a wagon and following this with a section harrow has proved very successful.

In overseeding native pastures, every effort should be made to bring the seed into direct contact with the soil. This may require double cutting the land with a disc harrow and covering the seed by means of a harrow or drag. In any case, seeds should be covered lightly.

Many owners of seed multiplication plots on the Dublin Project and attached camp areas have harvested their seed by mowing this year. After curing, the hay was placed on a tight floor or tarpaulin and threshed out by trampling or beating and winding. Seed thus obtained will be sowed on other parts of the farm. Since this form of threshing does not remove all the seed, the straw should be scattered over contour ridges, gullies or other parts of the pasture where seedbed preparation may not be advisable.

In establishing winter growth in permanent pastures, consideration should be given the following items:

1. Plant only adaptable clovers and grasses.

2. Choose land that will promote satisfactory growth.

3. Clover seed should be inoculated.

4. Plant the seed early in the fall, September and early October, on a well prepared firm seed-bed.

5. If possible, rotate the grazing. Giving the pasture a rest at the right time will result in better utilization of the pastures and higher seed yields.

-- Tex-8, Project,
Dublin, Texas.

CULTIVATION OF BERMUDA GETS GOOD RESULTS

The importance of cultivating Bermuda grass in establishing a permanent pasture has been thoroughly demonstrated to J. M. Estes, a cooperating farmer in the Crooked Creek area. The Plan of Conservation Operations on his farm called for 41 acres to be sodded to Bermuda grass. All but 3.5 acres of this sodding was done on contour ridges without any other treatment.

A suggestion was made to Mr. Estes that sodding be done on this 3.5 acres with some cultivated crop. Being a cooperator who is always looking for some better way of doing things on his farm, he readily agreed to plant a thin stand of sorghum on a prepared seed bed and cultivate the two crops - sorghum and Bermuda grass - as one crop. This resulted in a fair crop of sorghum and a fine stand and good growth of Bermuda grass, while that sodded without any seed bed preparation made practically no growth.

This year, Mr. Estes has a pasture on this 3.5 acre field that has erosion controlled on a sandstone soil, having a 9C slope, with 3 degree erosion, and is carrying three cows and his two horses, during the time that his team is not being worked, while his uncultivated Bermuda is showing a very poor growth, fair erosion control and poor carrying capacity as pasture.

-- Ark-3, Project,
Harrison, Arkansas.

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